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# The American Teacher

*Democracy in Education; Education for Democracy.*

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## INVENTORY

- ITEM: 1 lot Traditions concerning the superiority of schooling to living; shop-worn but still passable in mixt assemblies.
- ITEM: 1 lot Assumptions in regard to mental training; badly battered but usable in a pinch.
- ITEM: 1 lot Miscellaneous Information; rapidly becoming obsolete, but convenient for stop-gaps in thinking.
- ITEM: 1 dark gray Perplexity as to the validity of prevailing aims; a nuisance, but inalienable.
- ITEM: 1 gnawing Doubt as to the efficiency of my own methods; value not obvious, but said to be a hopeful sign.
- ITEM: 1 vigorous Resolution to do better this year; worth as much as all the rest of the outfit.

# CIVICS, AND TRAINING FOR CITIZENSHIP\*

JAMES SULLIVAN

Principal Boys High School, Brooklyn

IN THE high schools the study of civics has suffered and still suffers from the same faulty conception of the term "civics" as it has in the elementary schools. There has been the skeleton, but the life has been absent. The machinery of government has been described, but few teachers have taken the trouble to show how the machinery works in actual practise.

Another cause militating against good civics teaching is the theory advanced and upheld that civics may be taught as a part of history. The teacher who tries to teach civics as a part of history is teaching not the government as it is actually carried on today, but government in the form of constitutional history. Civics thus becomes, as Greek and Roman history used to be, the poor relation of another subject.

The teacher of civics, who may well be a teacher of history, should so divide his work that instruction in civics stands out as a distinct course, being given a specified number of hours, and having devoted to it an examination of its own. The teacher should have always before his mind the actual conditions in the world of government today, and should frequently say to his class, "In theory the government should work this way, but in actual practise it works thus." Where opportunity offers he should bring in illustrative material and contrasts from other countries, for a course in civics should be broader than a mere treatment of American government and conditions. By way of example, nothing is more effective in leading students to understand the Senate of the United States than a comparison of it with the House of Lords, the Bundesrath, and the

upper houses of other European countries. The effectiveness of Bryce's "American Commonwealth" is largely produced by making the contrasts which he employs. He is, so to speak, constantly saying, "In America you do it this way; in England we do it that way." Such a method leaves an indelible impression on the mind of the student.

The teacher of civics especially should be an active participant in the affairs of the every-day world. He should be a keen student of governmental and social conditions everywhere, and a faithful reader of our best newspapers. It may seem harsh to say it, but it is none the less true that the average woman, because of her lack of interest in the practical affairs of government, is disqualified as a teacher of civics. Much as some few may take an active interest in the political issues of the day, it must be said that the large mass of women are indifferent. It seems to be impossible to get the women teachers to take up the study of civics, to prepare themselves to teach it in the same way that they approach the subject of nature-study, for example. It is all very well to say that they ought to do it, but the fact remains that they do not. Without any wish to appear as the protagonist of woman suffrage, but merely in the expression of a desire to see carried out the best civics teaching possible, I must say that the only way that seems practicable to get women interested both as teachers and as students in governmental and civic affairs is to give them the ballot. Without it the average woman teacher must ever remain ineffective, but this must not be construed as implying that every man teacher of civics is as conscientious as he should be in the fulfillment of his obligations as a participant in the politics of the day.

\* From an address delivered before The Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools of the Middle States and Maryland, at Albany, N. Y., November 28, 1913.

So far I have left untouched the most important part of the subject before us—training for citizenship. I approach this matter with extreme misgiving, and perhaps with undue pessimism. My conclusion will be worse than my approach, in that when I am done I shall have no remedies to offer.

Mere knowledge of the machinery of government, of government in its actual working, of its good and its evil, will not make good citizens. Even ethical lessons put in appropriate places only too frequently fail when our young people go out into the world. It is with a sense of shame that we must realize that some of our worst political leaders are college graduates, that former members of our Federal Cabinet, filled with the erudition of our universities, knowing our government in all its intricacies, have utilized their knowledge to most corrupt ends in street railway and insurance manipulations. A former student of mine, who subsequently became the virtual head of a great life insurance company, said in a club in Boston, "I left college with the highest ideals. I went to New York and got into the maelstrom of actual life. There I was amazed to see that everybody I could call my friends—men of the highest education—were engaged in 'shady' practises. To my secret scruples came the oft-repeated statement, 'Those sentiments are all very well for college, but they don't go in real life. Everybody's doing it, my boy.'"

What chance have our ethical lessons, even if we could find some practical way of giving them, against a world like that? Truly religion, the fear of God and the

devil have left us, and we have nothing to take their places. We have to fall back on glittering generalities, and say we must train the boy's character so that he may have strength to resist temptation. Such training, however, is no more the function of civics than of every other subject in the curriculum. Training for character must be the sum total of all our training, but I must confess that I am at a loss how to train for character in our schools today. Preaching does not, for if it did our students would all be saints. The examples of some teachers might, but these are negated by the examples of other teachers. The home and the world would upset any good influence, even if all our teachers were perfect. Texts on "Training for Character" ought to afford us some help, but they are mainly devoted to telling us what character is, rather than to giving us some practical means for getting results.

Perhaps the least that we ought to be able to say of our instruction in civics as an aid to good citizenship is that it will do away with corrupt bosses. Surely the intelligent products of our efforts will not be the followers of a boss, but will be actively engaged in bringing about his downfall at the polls. Here again we are bad teachers or bad prophets, for every election finds our civically educated and supposedly virtuous citizen on the band-wagon of one or another boss. If he is not there, he is absent from the polls altogether with his cynical excuse, "What's the use?" We pity his taste, but the problem is still there. I present it to you for practical suggestions toward its solution. I cannot solve it.

What will a school principal accomplish who regards himself as bound to regulate his teachers by a rigid set of rules which he thinks best? In the best event the teacher will submit to his regulations and work as he commands. But they will beware of doing more, for they would run the risk of everything being disapproved of by the superior, that they did on their own initiative. Why should they expose themselves to blame when they can satisfy their principal in an easier way? They then enjoy, besides, the comfort of hiding, in critical

cases, behind the authority of the principal.

The over-zealous administrator accomplishes the opposite of that for which he is striving. He wishes to further the conscientious work of his teachers; in fact, he smothers in them the sense of responsibility to their own conscience. The work of his colleagues will become, instead of more intense, more superficial and perfunctory. The question of the principal's approval will be the most important for the teacher, and not the question of his personal relations with his pupils.—HERMANN WEIMER, in "The Way to the Heart of the Pupil."

## DEMOCRACY IN BUSINESS AND IN SCHOOL

JOSEPH B. LEE

NEW YORK CITY seems to be grasping the thought that its present semi-military and almost wholly autocratic system of school administration is not producing the results the citizens might expect from the vast expenditure of time and money. The hitherto seemingly undreamt of need of obtaining the active advice and co-operation of its thousands of teachers, in planning the courses of study, in selecting text-books, in participating in school administration, and in taking an independent part in settling its school problems, is beginning to be felt.

The chief obstacle in the way of this democratization of the New York public school system, in the eyes of those who are not wholly blinded by self-interest, has been the fear that such a step might lead to a condition of anarchy in which the interests of the pupils would be sacrificed to the selfish scrambling of groups of teachers for various material advantages. We believe that the experiences of cities in which democracy has been tried has shown the groundlessness of such fear. Indeed, even in the industrial world, under far less advantageous conditions, with workers less highly trained, and certainly not more devoted to their labors, self-government has proven successful.

In a bulletin of the United States Department of Labor (Miscellaneous Series, No. 4) is described the administration of one of Boston's largest and most prosperous department stores, Wm. Filene's Sons Co. Every employee and member of the management belongs to "The Filene Co-operative Association." The aid of the association, as the constitution reads, is

To give the members a voice in their government, to create and sustain a just and equitable relation between employer and employee, to increase efficiency, and to add to social opportunities.

Every employee has a voting power. The administrative officers of the association consist of a council, composed of the president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and nineteen others—seven elected at large and twelve elected from each of twelve sections of the store. These are elected by the association to hold office for one year.

A nominating committee elected by the members posts the nominations, which are then voted on by secret ballot by the employees. The council directs all the work of the association and makes the necessary rules and regulations. Should any regulation of the council not be agreeable to the members, 4 per cent. of them can petition the council to present the regulation to all the members to vote on. A majority vote of the membership against a rule nullifies it. The association, through its council, has still larger powers. The council can initiate, or amend, or cancel a rule of the store. If five-sixths of the council are in favor of the rule, and it is not vetoed by the general manager, it goes into effect within a week. In case of a veto by the store authorities, however, a two-thirds vote of the members in a mass meeting can pass the rule over the veto. This right was recently exercised with regard to the store apparel of employees. The council made a rule that employees wear white and black in winter. The board of managers of the store objected to this and wanted them to wear all black instead, but the members upheld their council and voted over the heads of the store management to wear white and black.

"The members of the association have also the power of initiation, or cancellation of any rule, either of the association or store management, by a two-thirds vote." The management has withdrawn its right to veto a two-thirds vote of The Filene Co-operative Association. The

Filene Company has also given the F. C. A. the right to nominate four of the eleven directors of the corporation itself.

One of the most important features of the association is the arbitration board. This board consists of one member from each section of the store, elected by secret ballot, and of one member from the record office and one from the general offices of the store. The function of the board is to adjust any difference between an employee and the firm, and between two employees in store matters. In case of dismissal, when the board is appealed to and votes for reinstatement by a two-thirds majority, the employee is forthwith reinstated. In any other case, such as deduction of salary, the majority vote of the board is sufficient to make the firm execute its orders. Over five hundred cases have come up before the arbitration board, showing that this privilege is used very freely.

The Filene Co-operative Association also operates a loan and deposit bureau, an insurance society, a lunch-room, a health department, a store paper, a cho-

ral club, a bureau of summer vacations and many minor activities. "To interest employees in the workings of the store and to encourage them to think for themselves, suggestion boxes have been placed about the building. A suggestion committee with a representative from the firm's office goes over the suggestions each week and makes awards for the good ones."

After reading what a commercial enterprise with its untrained help, in the face of the bitterest competition, has successfully done, does the notion that the sixteen thousand teachers of New York City might be allowed occasionally to act and think for themselves seem wholly absurd?

If unskilled clerks, after two weeks in the atmosphere of Filene's department store, are considered fit for such a wide measure of self-government, should not a limited degree of self-expression be allowed to the highly selected men and women that New York City chooses to instruct its young in those qualities of initiative, independence of thought, and self-control, so essential to good citizenship?

### AN ACTIVE SCHOOL COUNCIL

ALEXANDER FICHANDLER

Principal, P. S. 165, Brooklyn

A MEETING of teachers was held on November 24, 1913. The question of organizing a teachers' council was taken up. The teachers were asked to express their opinions. Many declared that such council would be advisable and desirable. Several objected, saying that there was no need of it in this school—teachers were permitted and invited to express their views on all possible subjects, their suggestions were considered and frequently adopted, and each teacher was given the greatest freedom in all school matters. This was met by the rejoinder that the establishment of a council would mean the advancement of a principle, and might lead to similar councils in other schools. Finally it was decided to try the experiment. A committee was elected to draft a tentative constitution.

The next meeting was held on December 8. A tentative constitution was submitted by the committee. Several changes were made, and it was finally adopted as amended. The constitution provides for a council consisting of one delegate from each year, and one each from the primary, intermediate and grammar grades (eleven in all); they are subject to recall. The council may consider and propose measures dealing with all administrative and pedagogic matters—all matters heretofore regulated by the principal. Since the principal is the responsible head of the school, such measures must be approved by him before becoming operative. Provision is made for initiative and referendum. Meetings of the council are held bi-weekly. The constitution may be amended with comparative ease.



The first meeting of the council was held December 15. The following measures were passed and approved by the principal:

Committee appointed to consider the matter of assembly programs.

Committee appointed to arrange rooms and time of meeting of all after-school organizations.

Hall and stairway guards to remain on duty till 3:05, so that pupils detained for a few minutes after 3 need not be accompanied by teachers when dismissed.

Committee appointed to standardize the work in penmanship thruout the school.

All notices except emergency notices to be circulated among the teachers before 9:15, between 12 and 1:10 and after 3. This is to be done to minimize interruption of class work. All notices to be countersigned by the principal. This to prevent some teachers from circulating unnecessary notices.

A sketch club to be organized.

A committee appointed to consider the question of assigning substitute teachers to assist in regular classes.

A committee appointed to find ways and means of decorating the auditorium and halls of the schools.

A committee appointed to co-operate with the graduating classes, with a view to securing a moving picture machine for the school.

All of these measures came from the teachers themselves, and seem to cover most of the departments of school management and administration. It is my purpose to approve all measures, unless they are contrary to the by-laws of the Board of Education or to the directions of my superiors, and unless they are obviously inexpedient.

The beginning is very promising. The spirit is just what I have been trying to develop—a spirit of freedom, initiative and responsibility.

### DEMOCRACY IN SCHOOL PRACTICE

JACOB M. ROSENBERG

Teacher P. S. 40, The Bronx, New York

THE voice of THE AMERICAN TEACHER has not been heard in vain at P. S. 40, The Bronx, the largest elementary school in the City of New York.

The school, under Principal William O'Flaherty, was built in 1906, to accommodate about 2,500 children in 60 rooms. To-day it houses 121 teachers, with a register of 5,700 children. The school has two sessions daily, from the kindergarten thru the 8-B grade.

The teachers, at the suggestion of Mr. O'Flaherty, have elected a council of ten members—one from each year and two delegates-at-large. The principal is allowing free scope to this council to aid him in solving the problems of such an enormous school.

The council has already organized committees on arithmetic, geography, history and English. These committees are to give the value of classroom experience and classroom observations to the 121 teachers.

The teaching corps has also been allowed to organize its own extension course in methods. Every Friday morning one of the faculty addresses the teachers for 20 minutes on one of a series of assigned pedagogical topics. The presentation is followed by 20 minutes of open discussion, to bring theory and practise to bear on each other.

This spirit of self-government and co-operation has been reflected in the organization of a children's school council, called the "Social Service League." The children's league is planning to help Mr. O'Flaherty and his little band of 121 make "40, The Bronx," a happy home for 6,000 of their fellow classmates. This Social Service League of the children hopes to branch out into valuable and needful neighborhood work.

A visit to the building will convince one of the value of enlisting the help of teachers and pupils in the running of a successful school—one that is truly of educational value to all under its roof.

# THE SCHOOL AND THE CHILD

JOSEPH E. COHEN

THE EDUCATION of the child is largely what we make it.

Flowers sometimes blow beautifully in filth, but more often disease breeds there and sacks the city.

The farmer does not scatter his seed to the wind, with the prayer and hope that some may settle in fertile ground and bring forth a crop. He selects the soil which carries the best store of food for the seed he wishes to sow, drains the ground or irrigates it, as the case requires, and limes or fertilizes it, waits for the right season and day to plant, removes the weeds and the plant's enemies, and lends Nature whatever other aid he can to bring forth a good yield in the harvest.

And thus must we do for the crop of children that we expect to grow to manhood and womanhood and become the nation.

The child must not be the victim of its parents. Whether the parents of the child be thrifty or indolent, wealthy or poor, devoted or despicable, competent or ignorant, the child must have the opportunities accorded every other child.

That is to say, we as a nation must see to it that the children of the land shall be given every care and attention needed to have them flower to full manhood and womanhood.

For the biggest part of the school is not inclosed within four walls. It begins when the child is born—if not before. It begins with those things which are necessary to give the little one a sound body and a clear mind.

The child asks for proper shelter and healthy surroundings before even the kindergarten is reached.

The socialization of our education as well as its *realization* is illustrated by the co-operative construction of a new building for the industrial department of the Manatee (Florida) high school. Concrete blocks were prepared by the grammar school pupils and the walls

It requires good, wholesome food, whatever medical attention may be necessary, clothing and playtime.

Such things are demanded in order that the child's period in the classroom may be put to the best advantage; the child must continue in school until it is fully equipped to take its place in the working world, with the chance of using its faculties and talents to the utmost.

A great deal of learning must be done in the home. But when the home is only a repulsive hovel, with meagre furniture, insufficient food, absence of warmth, and with illness and disease peeping out from every corner, learning from the school book falls behind in favor of the bitter lessons of poverty.

There is no way out of it but that we, as a nation, shall give to the nation's children equal opportunity to all that education implies.

We know only too well from past experience that we shall likely do that first which lies nearest to hand—or seems to. We shall go at the task piecemeal and arrive at the journey's end by the long way around. But we shall get there.

And for all that, the time is not far distant when we shall have children born into the world because we shall want them as much as we want sunshine after sorrow.

We shall have the children receive the food and the care to mold their bodies and minds fairer and finer.

We shall have the schools play the part of the happy journey from the home to the industrial world.

And we shall have the world fit for the children to live in so as to become the greater nation.

were built by the high school boys, who also put on the roof. The girls contributed the labor of applying the laths. The building was designed and the work was supervised by the principal, in whose honor the structure is now called the "Kendall Industrial Institute."

## ARE VISITING TEACHERS WORTH WHILE?

*Complaints of Children by school or others—*

1. Slept in school; dull and indifferent.
2. Teacher's verdict: worst boy in school; boy boasted of this.
3. Poorly nourished; wrong food.
4. Impertinent, idle, etc.
5. Disorderly.
6. Incurable at home and school; poor work in class.
7. Harboring truants in den in the child's yard.
8. Cruel treatment at home made boy sick at school.
9. Unmanageable at home and school; immoral.

*Successful outcome through efforts of Visitor—*

- Night peddling stopped by scholarship. Works well in school; ambition roused for technical education.
- Boy watched and placed in carpentry class. Now boasts of his success and takes all he makes in shop to school teacher.
- Mother angered at suggestions, but followed them, with gain to child.
- Value of school training explained: child responded.
- Many weeks of persuasion and suggestion: changed diet, whole standard of living, and moved to better quarters.
- Sunday School, sewing class, etc.: excellent work at school; stays home, off streets.
- Other amusements provided for the group: class formed at a settlement for shop work.
- Father and mother treated boy differently after visitor showed interest.
- Encouragement by visitor and teachers, continual supervision at home and school: record at school excellent, and girl placed in Clara de Hirsch Home at her own request.

## TO MAKE TEACHING A PROFESSION

THE three conditions necessary for making our calling a profession were described by Dean George F. James of the College of Education of the State University of Minnesota. At the last meeting of the State Teachers' Association he summarized these conditions as follows:

1. Hedging of admission requirements to the profession by raising qualification standards all along the line from rural to high schools.
2. Fairer conditions of appointment and promotion and a fixed tenure far

beyond that which has been established so far, except thru the concerted action and feeling of the teaching force in the large cities.

3. Adequate financial reward and social consideration for teachers, including minimum salary provisions and increase in salary to be reckoned on 12 months of service, which shall be something more, instead of, as now, considerably less, than in proportion to the increased cost of living, and finally pension law enactment that shall provide for every teacher in the commonwealth.



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*This paper seeks to advance the status of the teacher to the dignity and the influence of a profession, by advocating high standards of admission to the calling; by urging an extension of the opportunities for the participation of teachers in the direction of educational affairs; and by supporting the organization of teachers for all legitimate professional purposes.*

## PENSIONS

MUCH of the disharmony that obtains among groups of teachers and officials on the subject of pensions arises from a confusion as to the purpose of a pension system. Under one name we bring together a diversity of ideas and motives that are perhaps irreconcilable. It is

well to clear our minds of the confusion and to decide just what it is that we mean when we advocate one plan in preference to another.

Is a pension system designed to reimburse a body of underpaid public servants in their old age for the privations and hardships of their working years?

Or is it a charitable enterprise designed to mitigate the hardships of old servants when these have become helpless?

Or is it a scheme to enable the public to rid itself of worn-out servants in a way that will not ruffle the feelings?

Or is it a plan for compelling commercially incompetent servants to insure themselves against the unproductive years?

Or is it a method of giving protected leisure to people who would rather loaf than work?

Or is it a combination of some or all of these?

Or is it something entirely different from any of these?

Until we do make up our minds just what we expect of a pension system, we shall not be able to decide whether the city or state should find any or all of the necessary funds for a pension system; or whether the teachers should themselves supply a little, or much, or any of the money. We shall not be able to decide whether retirements should be upon a flat sum basis, or upon a portion of the final salary; we shall not be able to decide whether retirement shall be determined by age, or by length of service, or by the character of the service, or by the degree of disability.

Another important question that has received very little attention in this country is that of provision for the widows and orphans of teachers—or for civil servants in general. The military standards have so long obsessed the mind of the race that we take it for granted that the widow of an admiral shall receive an annuity, but raise our eyebrows at the suggestion of a public subsidy for the orphans of a letter-carrier or a teacher.

The extracts from the study of pensions in Great Britain, printed on another page, will be of interest to those who are trying to find a clew thru the

chaos of claims and suggestions. But we shall not have a comprehensive program of pension legislation until we have defined the place of the teacher in society.

### TRAINING FOR CITIZENSHIP

ONE of the important ends of education now generally agreed upon is that in some way or other our teaching should train for citizenship. What we mean by good citizenship may not always be the same set of qualities or civic accomplishments, but it is probable that among them would be included definite knowledge of the largest community interests and an inclination to participate in deciding or shaping policies regarding them. Let us say that every good citizen would not only vote as a duty, but would desire to vote on every issue that might affect the welfare of himself, or of those dependent upon him.

Dr. Sullivan, in the article, "Civics, and Training for Citizenship," which we are glad to print in this issue, presents for thoughtful consideration a problem which he confesses he cannot solve. Difficult as the solution may be, the original trouble is not due to an undiscovered microbe. Nor has the situation of bad citizenship developed from other concealed causes. It is evident there would be no bad citizenship if there were no bad civic ideals discrediting, threatening and tending to break down certain good ideals which we ourselves have always been setting up.

Some of the manifestations of bad citizenship are indeed new and characteristic of our own times, but it is equally true that some of our political heroes of one hundred years ago engaged in practises that would mean political destruction for them if followed today. This is evidence enough that we are getting ahead. However, a well-conceived notion of all that good citizenship might mean for us, including some idea of the causes of bad citizenship, would put us much farther forward.

One of the conclusions now being

drawn from history is that we get ahead better when we work together. We are doing anything but working together when we engage in or permit others to engage in the financial or political cutting of throats. It would require great moral courage in the typical young college graduate, of whom Dr. Sullivan writes, to take a stand against his own friends who feed their power by cutting the throats of people who perchance are not their friends. It would be unfair to say that the young man ought to take his stand against his friends, when the real fight is obviously against the social system or custom which human beings have allowed to grow up, whereby the strong or fortunately situated have preyed upon the rest of us. So far-reaching has become this custom of mankind that college and school advice, given by persons who in a measure do not feel the greatest stress of competition, is tossed aside as useless or visionary.

Preaching to young people and voting against bad candidates and political bosses are almost as futile as not inviting an economic highbinder to dinner. The highbinders forge ahead, indifferent alike to preaching, voting and dining out, for they have the power to discredit the preaching, and the material with which to make more bad bosses when the old ones are gone. They can almost determine whether there shall be any dinner for those who would not invite them.

Our suggestion leading toward the better training of the young for citizenship would be that the schools should point the way, and show why the people, whose interest is in good citizenship, should control even to extermination those economic forces, whose interest is in bad citizenship, and whose power is advanced thru bad civic ideals.

## TEACHERS AND POLITICS

MRS. ELLA FLAGG YOUNG failed of reelection to the superintendency of the Chicago public schools because she has not been acceptable to certain interests that have "influence" in the city. Mayor Harrison responded to the outcry of indignation that arose from the teachers and from groups of women and other organizations not formed primarily for profit; he responded by accepting the resignations of certain of the members of the Board of Education that he had himself appointed. He then named other commissioners, pledged to support Mrs. Young. The reorganized Board met and elected Mrs. Young superintendent. Now Mr. Shoop, who had been legally elected superintendent to succeed Mrs. Young, is to take his claim to the position to the courts, on the ground that the new Board had no authority to undo the action of the old Board. That is politics.

\* \* \* \*

At the last meeting of the South Dakota Educational Association, resolutions were adopted in favor of the enfranchisement of women and endorsing the constitutional amendment providing for equal suffrage that is to be submitted to the voters of the state at the next general election. That is politics, too.

\* \* \* \*

When the mayor of New York was about to appoint a number of commissioners to the Board of Education, he received communications from individual citizens and groups of citizens, suggesting names for the positions, and offering objections to certain candidates. Groups of teachers also made recommendations—some on the ground that So-and-so will be friendly to You-know-who, or to "what we stand for"; others, on the ground that A Certain Person was eminently qualified for the position to be filled. The mayor considered the recommendations of citizens with proper courtesy; the recommendations of the teachers he considered impertinent. Nor did he discriminate between the recommenda-

tions that were backed by personal or group interests from those that were prompted by a disinterested concern for the welfare of the schools. This, too, is politics.

A special committee of the American Association for the Advancement of Science has addressed to educational institutions, government bureaus and other agencies engaged in scientific research an invitation to send delegates to the Convocation Week Meeting, held this year at Atlanta. The City of New York has authorized Dr. Albert Shiels, director of the recently established Division of Reference and Research, to attend this meeting. Heretofore the Boards of Education of our cities have not sufficiently utilized the many meetings and conferences that take place throughout the year, for the purpose of gathering to their schools the benefit of outside experience. Every city can well afford to add to its budget an item that will permit the sending of suitable representatives to educational, sociological and scientific conferences. Like every extension of the public's agencies, this has its dangers; but we must think of the advantages and eliminate the grafters.

The Board of Education of New York at its last meeting dismissed another married teacher from the service. Those who are disposed to rejoice in this fact must remember that she was dismissed for deliberately misrepresenting facts to the superintendents, and not for committing matrimony.

An unfortunate incident arising out of the Civic Survey of the city of Newburgh, N. Y., was the active opposition of members of the Board of Education to the publication of the results. It behaved for all the world like a Board of Obscuration. There are too many boards of that kind in this country. Let's teach the youngsters in our charge to get rid of such boards when they grow up.

## TEACHERS' PENSIONS

APROPOS of the current discussion on pensions, THE AMERICAN TEACHER presents the following quotations from U. S. Bureau of Education Bulletin No. 34, 1913, on "Teachers' Pension Systems in Great Britain," by Professor Raymond W. Sies:

"It is quite clear from the present study that the state has been the sole effective agent in making provision for superannuated and incapacitated teachers in Great Britain.

"There are those in America of individualistic bent who would very much like to see the state pursue a laissez-faire policy with regard to teachers' pensions, believing that the matter should be left to the teachers themselves. Those who are skeptical of the importance of teachers' pensions are perfectly consistent in this attitude; but, granting that the pensions are desirable or needful, state action seems the only effective means for gaining the desired end.

"Differences of practise in different countries in the matter of exacting contributions from teachers in support of public pension systems in their favor raises an important issue in the economics of teachers' pensions. Thruout Germany, with the exception of Bavaria, teachers pay no contributions whatever. In France heavy retents from salaries are universal. Practise in Great Britain represents a compromise between these extremes, since the contributions on the whole are moderate in amount. In the United States small contributions are usually required. Except often for a period of years following the introduction of a substantial pension system, the writer distinctly favors the German practise, in view of its simplicity and administrative economy, because contributions or retents are not necessary in the long run to secure the perfectly legitimate end sought, viz.: partial or complete support of the pension system by the beneficiaries.

"As a permanent policy, the German is the correct one. The writer has no disposition to criticize the requirement of contributions as an initial temporary feature. . . . It is the permanent requirement of contributions that is deemed inadvisable.

. . . The writer's suggestion is that legal provision be made for the gradual suppression of these contributions in the interest of general economy for the future.

"The real justification (of pensions) does not lie in any benefit to teachers as individuals, but in resulting improvements in education making for greater efficiency and economy.

"Regardless of the question concerning the advantage of independent pension funds in connection with teachers' pension systems, the organization and administration of the funds of this type in Great Britain on actuarial principles and advice are especially commendable. . . . In the United States at least the application of actuarial science and advice in the management of such funds has been woefully neglected, with undesirable and even disastrous consequences in certain quarters.

"If pensions are not dependent upon salary, they must ordinarily be small; otherwise the pensions of many persons will exceed the salaries previously drawn—an intolerable state of affairs. Small pensions, however, bear no proper relation to the standard and expense of living of those drawing the better salaries and occupying the larger and more dignified positions. It is unsafe to assume that they save a greater proportion of their salaries than others, since many of them have families, and social pressure requires of them a standard of living commensurate with their position.

"American practise may well follow more largely than it does that of Great Britain and other European countries in providing small pensions to facilitate the retirement of teachers who become incapacitated prematurely.

"The conditions and methods controlling actual retirement on a pension are very important. The arbitrary retirement of teachers at a given time determined by age, or by age and service together, is wasteful. At best this time can be properly adapted only to the so-called average or typical teacher. Some teachers of impaired efficiency should be required to retire earlier on smaller pensions, and others who retain their efficiency should be permitted, and even expected, to continue in service longer.

"There is a distinct advantage in having pension systems as wide as is feasible territorially. A teacher passing from one place to another should not be obliged to forfeit claims he may have acquired to a pension in the first position. The necessity of such forfeiture tends to render the teaching body static and inert. Teachers tend to become local fixtures. Reasonable mobility in the profession is highly desirable, as well as reasonable stability.

"Finally, attention may be called to the almost complete absence of pensions for the widows and orphans of public-school teachers in Great Britain, in harmony with conditions in the United States, and in contrast with those in the leading countries of continental Europe. For over a century a State pension fund for pensioning the widows and orphans of certain public-school teachers has been in existence in Scotland."

(The Bulletin from which these quotations are taken may be obtained free on application to the Bureau of Education, Washington, D. C.)

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### ELEMENTARY CIVICS

A TEACHER LIVED in a community where sanitation seemed almost an unheard of thing. She preached it continually to her pupils but seemingly with small success. This was not a congested part of a large city, but in a little country town—a "tough town."

Not the slightest cleaning up of cans and debris began with spring, and the flies swarmed everywhere. Illustrated lectures on flies did not seem to attain the desired end. At last an inspiration came in a circular from the State Board of Health. This body was offering first and second cash prizes to the best Grammar grade essay on the most unsanitary back yard in the community of the writer.

On Friday the teacher assigned the fifth grade language as follows: "Between to-day and Monday I want every member of the class to take a pad and pencil, examine every back and front yard in this town, take notes on each one as to all unsanitary conditions you may

see there and write for your lesson Monday, 'The Worst Yard in Town, and Why.' Perhaps to-morrow will be the best day for making your notes."

With the freedom of children they looked pointedly at some of the most offensive places, and the campaign had begun.

"I shall send the best paper to the State Board of Health and if they think it is worth it, they will send you a prize and publish the paper," continued the teacher.

Pride and fear of publicity worked where altruistic measures failed. By the time this teacher left her school house in the evening, she saw children busily raking their yards, in some cases the parents helping. Old cans and rags and papers disappeared mysteriously with other vermin breeding filth, and before the Monday afternoon language class was called, the town was an improved place. It was easy for the teacher to take advantage of this condition and keep it there.

Her second language paper was entitled "The Greatest Improvement in a Back Yard" and called for another inspection of each place by the children.

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To promote the standard of teaching, the teachers of Schenectady are allowed a sabbatical year for study and travel, with one-third payment of salary. The conditions are as follows: The teacher must map out a course of study in some recognized institution of learning and have it approved by the superintendent of schools in advance. In cases of travel, her itinerary must be approved in the same way. A teacher may have such sabbatical year once in ten years, and in exceptional cases, once in seven years. Each teacher accepting such leave of absence agrees to teach in the Schenectady schools for at least three years. If she fails to return after the leave of absence, she refunds the amount of the salary advanced. If she leaves after less than three years' service, she refunds a pro-rata amount of the salary advanced.



### CHILD LABOR DAY

THE National Child Labor Committee is asking that school principals shall bring the subject of child labor before their schools on Monday, January 26. The committee is glad to send facts and suggestions for assembly talks to all who wish to observe Child Labor Day, and a card addressed to the National Child Labor Committee, 105 East 22d Street, New York, will bring you a Child Labor Day pamphlet.

The committee is asking this special co-operation of schools for several reasons. Of course, educators are active allies in the fight against child labor, but they do not always remember the part the teacher in the schoolroom plays, in influencing the child to remain in school when various forces are drawing him away to go to work. Of this, Child Labor Day may well be a reminder to the teachers. The day gives an opportunity to set before the children themselves quite definitely and concretely the future they will face if they yield to the desire for independence or the ambition to be up and doing which beckons them into industry too soon. The sober fact that all the girls and nine-tenths of the boys who leave school to go to work under 16 years will enter low grade occupations, with an average wage for all employees of less than \$10 a week, should be brought home to all school children above 12 years of age. For those other children who are so situated that, as a matter of course, they will remain in school until they are 16 years or older, it is well worth while to hear of the children who are at work.

For the teachers of younger children the committee has a limited number of the special Child Labor Bulletin, "Child Labor Stories for Children." This is an illustrated volume describing half a dozen child-employing industries, and will be sent, postage prepaid, for 25 cents, as long as the edition lasts. Stereopticon slides have been made from the illustrations, and these can be rented at a nominal charge.

### COLLEGES AND DEMOCRACY

In America there are three sexes—men, women and professors. It is the saying of European scholars looking from those self-governing democracies, their universities, upon ours. They see ours ruled without the consent of the governed thru presidential autocrats by boards of non-scholar trustees—not a part of the world of learning, but superimposed upon it. The American professor has the status of an employee subject to dismissal without trial by men not his colleagues.

The universities of Germany, the older universities of England and Scotland respect and trust and leave free the individual. Their organization gives them the right to regard themselves as provinces of the republic of letters. The overlorded universities of America have no such right.

For a couple of centuries American professors have submitted to a system which gives most of them little control over their own lives, small power to defend any truth which has powerful enemies, no part in shaping the policies of the institutions in which they teach. Hence the pitiable figure of the American scholar to whom Emerson, Emersonically oblivious of such little matters as despotic college government, held up a high ideal of independent manhood.

The position of her scholars under the thumb of business men and capitalists who control the university purse is enough to account for the fact that America is intellectually second rate. Unless content to remain so, Americans have got to think down to bedrock about university government and do what thought demands.

Feeling that something is wrong, we have begun to examine the life of our universities, but no general attention has centered as yet upon their inherited, undemocratic system of control which is bearing the fruit of timidity and subservience among those twenty-three thousand men and five thousand women whose social function is to create and transmit American thought.—George Cram in *The Forum* for October.

# BOOK NOTES

All books can be ordered from  
**THE AMERICAN TEACHER**

The report of the Committee on School Inquiry of the Board of Estimate and Apportionment of the City of New York has been the subject of several kinds of comment. But the reports of the experts were printed in editions ridiculously inadequate to meet the needs of the teaching and supervisory staff of the city; and the service that such a study could be to the outside world was apparently ignored completely. Summaries of the various reports have been published in the newspapers; special summaries were published by the Bureau of Municipal Research of New York, and the Public Education Association is issuing abstracts of the several reports. The complete reports, so far as they have to do with the educational aspects of the inquiry, are being reprinted in a series of volumes under the title "The School Efficiency Series," by the World Book Company, Yonkers, N. Y. These books are under the general editorship of Professor Paul H. Hanus, and include the "suppressed" report on the organization and administration of the Board of Education, by Professor Ernest C. Moore, and there is some interesting material in each volume that does not appear in the official reports. The volume bearing the title of the series is by Professor Hanus himself and presents a summary of the findings of the various investigators, with many practical suggestions that will apply to cities other than New York.

For the third time Associate Superintendent Garber of Philadelphia gives us a summary of educational progress in a compact, convenient and readable form.\* It is a distinct service to the teachers of the country that he is rendering in extracting from the masses of pamphlets, the proceedings of societies, from books, reports and magazines, the substance of what most concerns us, and in presenting the concentrated essence in a topical arrangement. It is to be regretted that it takes so long for the activities of a year to be recorded, and for the records to be edited, and for the summaries to be printed; but when the work is done we have in a handy volume a good substitute for much cumbersome printed matter. Dr. Garber is to be thanked for his contribution to lengthening the life of the teacher.

\*CURRENT ACTIVITIES AND INFLUENCES IN EDUCATION.—A report upon educational movements throughout the world. Being the third volume of "The Annals of Educational Progress" [For 1912]. By JOHN PALMER GARBER, Ph.D. Philadelphia: Lippincott. \$1.25.

# THE OPEN COURT

To the Editors, The American Teacher:

I am much interested in your enterprise and most favorably impressed by your periodical. I feel the greatest sympathy with the individual good teacher, who is never in a position to do his or her best when dominated by the rules of a centralized system. It is as fatal to teach under administrative coercion as to amuse one's self under strict supervision. I infer that you stand for individual freedom on the one hand, and the dominating influence of the teachers themselves on the other. We, of course, have the same fight in our universities, where the only people who know about the profession are just those who have very little influence in determining the educational policy. I am subscribing to your magazine with much satisfaction.

J. H. Robinson.

Columbia University.

To the Editors, The American Teacher:

I can't express my appreciation of what you are doing to raise the standard of the profession. Your paper should be in the hands of every teacher.

Charles K. Bliss,

Secretary Seattle Teachers' Association.

To the Editors, The American Teacher:

Three cheers for your attitude concerning teacher-mothers! Long may your paper prosper.

Mary Eaton.

Brooklyn.

Dogmatism is shown now and then by the lordly reference which a principal makes to "my" teachers. As a matter of fact, neither by law, by relationship, by inferiority, nor even by sympathy are they "his" teachers. In an affectionate sort of way, he may call the children "his children," but it is carrying the connotation too far to apply it to his relation to the teachers. It is usually the arbitrary and non-sympathetic principal who will insist on using this expression.—FELIX ARNOLD, in *School and Class Management*.

## THE TEACHERS TRAINING

WHILE YEAR after year thousands of persons, not of a high grade of scholarship, and with no knowledge of the scientific principles, methods and history of education, are appointed as teachers in the public schools, can we expect to raise our schools to that plane which they ought to occupy, to make them that civilizing force which the necessities of our political system demand? The state will not allow a lawyer to practise on our property, nor physicians upon our bodies, nor even a dentist upon our teeth, unless he has successfully gone thru a course of professional training. Should it exercise less care in the case of those who are to practise on the intellectual faculties of its own citizens? Surely not. Surely if this subject were understood, if its tremendous importance were appreciated, all intelligent, conscientious men and women would stand shoulder to shoulder for this the greatest of all educational reforms.—William H. Maxwell, before Department of Superintendence, N. E. A., February, 1890.

It is as great as it is a widespread mistake, to regard school work as the criterion of the whole worth of a human being.—HERMANN WEIMER, in "The Way to the Heart of the Pupil."

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## THE WAIL OF THE WELL

MAY AYRES

In The American School Board Journal

Johnny Jones has lost a leg,  
Fanny's deaf and dumb,  
Marie has epileptic fits,  
Tom's eyes are on the bum,  
Sadie stutters when she talks,  
Mabel has T. B.,  
Morris is a splendid case of imbecility,  
Billy Brown's a truant,  
And Harold is a thief,  
Teddy's parents give him dope,  
And so he came to grief.  
Gwendolin's a millionaire,  
Jerald is a fool,  
So every one of these darned kids  
Goes to a special school.  
They've specially nice teachers,  
And special things to wear,  
And special time to play in,  
And a special kind of air.  
They've special lunches, right in school,  
While I—it makes me wild!—  
I haven't any specialties,  
I'm just a normal child.